



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
**REGION IX**  
 75 Hawthorne Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94105

February 2014

Dear Resident:

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board continue to direct an environmental study in Palo Alto in connection with the Hewlett Packard 620-640 Page Mill Road Site, the former Varian Associates, Inc. facility at 601 California Avenue and the former Hewlett Packard facility at 395 Page Mill Road. The purpose of the study is to determine if certain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are migrating as vapors from groundwater into the indoor air of nearby buildings ("vapor intrusion").

As EPA communicated to you in December 2012, no evidence of vapor intrusion was found during the indoor air testing of your home. Since then, EPA lowered its health protective levels for TCE and adopted a more cautious policy for this type of testing. We now recommend that indoor air samples be taken in the cold weather season as buildings tend to be closed more tightly during that time, which could heighten the potential for vapor intrusion. We also recommend that samples be taken from crawlspaces below homes where they exist. Although the potential impact to indoor air is likely low, especially given that vapor intrusion was not detected in the previous sampling of homes in your neighborhood in 2012, as a precaution, **EPA would like permission to re-test the air inside your home to confirm the previous results. There is no cost to you for this testing.**

The main chemical of concern in this investigation is trichloroethene (TCE), which has been detected in groundwater in your neighborhood. Please be aware that your drinking water is not affected by this contamination. Your water comes from municipal sources including Hetch Hetchy in the Sierra.

VOCs are chemicals that are contained in products commonly used in industry and often around the home and can be present in both indoor and outdoor air. Examples of products containing VOCs are paints, paint strippers, and cleaning supplies. VOCs can move as vapors from groundwater through soil under certain conditions. If vapors move under a structure, it is possible for them to pass through cracks and other openings in the foundation and accumulate inside. If this happens, and if the levels of VOCs are high enough and prolonged enough, it can create a health hazard for residents.

The process for testing for VOCs in indoor air involves placing a sampling device in your home and crawlspace (if accessible) that takes in air over a 24-hour period. EPA prefers to conduct two 24-hour sampling events spaced one or two weeks apart and requests your cooperation in allowing two sampling rounds. EPA will notify you of the results within a few weeks. Should VOCs be found in your home at levels requiring further actions or evaluation, EPA will present options as to how we would complete the evaluation or remedy the situation. There is no cost to you for this process.

**Please contact us at (415) 972-3242 and leave your name, phone number, home address and the best time to reach you** so we may call you to set up an appointment to visit with you and arrange for the sampling within the next few weeks. You may also email us at [diaz.alejandro@epa.gov](mailto:diaz.alejandro@epa.gov). **Again, there is no cost to you for this sampling.** We would greatly appreciate your cooperation. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Diaz  
 Community Involvement Coordinator